

## **Part Four**

# **Theory to Practice: Implications for DTLOMS**

### ***Theory to Practice***

When an army's basic conceptions of warfare cannot accommodate new developments in its strategic and operational environment, several courses of action are available to it. The first—and most often preferred—is naturally to do nothing at all, in the hope that these new circumstances are only a momentary aberration, a slight arrhythmia in an otherwise healthy organ.

The second course of action is favored by the radical: this requires willfully ignoring experience and practical traditions in the name of true progress. The approach assumes that the world of the past will somehow disappear so that the new way can prevail. Unfortunately, a given point in history is never all old or all new but some mixture of the two. The US Army implicitly recognizes this when certain older “legacy” systems are referred to, meaning that they will have to stay in service just a while longer, until successor systems arrive to take their place.

The third course of action is the course taken most often: this entails a clear-headed and unsentimental view of how far the new course will diverge from the old. Then, the question becomes how much newness the institution can accommodate at a given time.

It will be said that these are the habits of a highly conservative organization, but there are excellent reasons for this inherent conservatism, which will be familiar to anyone with even the sketchiest knowledge of the history of war. Armies are conservative because they must be prepared to conserve themselves against political, technical, and operational stresses. In modern terms, armies concern themselves with readiness to perform their strategic missions. But the US Army has shown itself, on occasion, to be sufficiently flexible to handle what amounted to radical change, albeit at a pace that surely would not satisfy the most impatient transformationists among us.

If one were to compare the US Army's receptiveness toward progress with that of other armies of the world, one might be impressed to learn that the American Army has intentionally reformed itself on

two separate occasions—the far-reaching Root Reforms after the Spanish-American War and the DePuy Revolution in the middle 1970s. Only a few select armies may claim to have performed such a feat. Self-reform is possible for any army. One might even argue that, in the most advanced armies of the day, regeneration may only be possible from within because of the professional-technical nature of modern warfare.

Once an army begins its regeneration, the process of change tends to flow along well-traveled institutional lines: its chain of command, its organizational networks, its professional cliques, just to name a few. Within any army, the avenues of change are not only those that are duly constituted and authorized, for we must remember that armies are distinct types of subculture as well. Any change an army undertakes must pass muster, and the number of ways an army can refuse to cooperate with reform is beyond counting. If the army does not sign up for change, the party should be canceled.

During the late 1980s, General Carl Vuono, then the US Army's Chief of Staff, began referring to several operational and institutional priorities that could keep the Army focused on its most important responsibilities. In their original shape, these priorities were doctrine, organization, training, leader development, materiel, and soldiers—or DTLOMS, for short. In the ten years and more since their inception, these priorities have come to exercise a certain discipline over the whole process of developing forces for the Army. Today, through the Army's Force Development Process, a highly formalized sequence of analyses is conducted to identify and validate specific requirements for the Army's use.

When DTLOMS made its first appearance, the strategic and operational context in which the Army operated was far different. In those days, of course, the most important strategic point of reference was the Cold War. Gradually, the Army has acknowledged that the strategic and operational verities of the Cold War are no longer in force. In 1994, the Training and Doctrine Command published its pamphlet 525-5, entitled *Force XXI Operations: A Concept for the Evolution of Full-Dimension Operations for the Strategic Army of the Early Twenty-First Century*. The concept attempted to anticipate the broader features of the Army's operational future, predicting smaller, more highly technical, more quickly and easily deployable lethal forces. Its authors wrote of a "living doctrine" based on a "fluid strategic environment"—hardly concepts the US Army would have been comfortable with just a decade earlier.<sup>1</sup> The newest edition of the

Army's capstone operational manual—what was once designated FM 100-5 but, to emphasize the Army's commitment to joint operations, is now Field Manual 3.0—as of this writing has been released only as a Student Text. FM 3.0 is even less tentative about the new operational style imagined in the old TRADOC concept.<sup>2</sup>

All of which is why it is necessary to return for a moment to the conception of war broached in the last chapter, for it is a nation's conception of war that, in the final analysis, determines the shape of an army's doctrine. If one were to enumerate the fundamental structural elements of the American conception of war in the present and foreseeable future, one would see the following:

- A US-based force.
- A standing, ready, operational force.
- A rapidly deployable strategic force.
- A technologically advanced force.
- A light force.
- A lethal force.
- A limited force.

The resulting picture is that of an American strategic expeditionary force, one whose methods naturally capitalize upon its unique character. Such a force is obviously not fitted to conduct a sustained high-intensity conflict by itself, but then, modern armies are no longer expected to operate in isolation from air and naval services, nor, indeed, is it at all probable that nations in the future would engage unilaterally in such a conflict. It is therefore no risk at all to expect that future conflict will be of the sort where forces such as those fielded now by the US Army are more than equal to operational demands. Nor is it a risk to suppose that those demands will increasingly be made and met in the urban environment.

This is the nexus—the crossroads between conflict and the urban future—where strategic questions of the future will be posed and answered.

The era of the iron force is over. The nation that will lead the military world this next century already produces and employs its coercive power differently from any army in history. Finesse is replacing weight as the basis of American military power. In times past, military force

produced action by the application of weight as much as violence. Operational and tactical successes were achieved as the struggle between two masses “developed the situation.” Now, the situation can be developed in advance of military action by the rapid planning and projection of national power before one soldier has deployed. The employment of cybernetic and other special, national-level assets can begin to shape the situation even before actual forces have begun to move. In the best possible case, then, the closure of friendly troops on the objective would mark the *consummation* of strategic success, not the commencement of struggle toward it. The concentration of action, time, and space in the urban environment works to the advantage of such forces, employing highly controlled, measured applications of power to achieve strategic ends in the shortest possible time. None of this has to do merely with the preference of one operational style over another; *the United States’ coercive power must be applied in such a way that it attains its objectives first, even if it cannot initiate the conflict. Strategic speed is now the basis of American military power.*<sup>3</sup>

### ***Requirements for DTLOMS: An Unconstrained Analysis***

The translation of military theory into military practice is not so mysterious or difficult as it is usually depicted. In general, it consists merely of stating the best, or ideal, case with the knowledge that at some point practicalities will intervene, that compromises with present or unforeseen factors will have to be made, and that, in the end, some degree less than the ideal will be attained. Any idea that survives this process is more likely to be workable than not. Doctrine is the medium in which this translation is made, and that is why it is necessary to begin there.

### ***Doctrine***

The 1964 *Dictionary of Army Terms* defines doctrine as the “best available military thought that can be defended by reason.” Using this basic standard, the US Army’s operational doctrine with regard to full-spectrum urban operations is inadequate. In this respect, current operational doctrine merely reflects the current state of thinking on this subject in the armed forces. The same is true of subordinate tactical, or “how to fight,” doctrine found in Field Manual 90-10 and FM 90-10-1. Army urban operations doctrine is, in effect, frozen in time. In light of these facts, the following changes should be considered:

- TRADOC should take the initiative in building up a new body of professional information and developing new operational-level techniques and procedures through an iterative process of general officer review boards, Battle Command Exercises, and a program designed to develop adequate simulations at higher-than-tactical level. Program development and oversight should be conducted by a General Officer Task Group at TRADOC Headquarters.
- In conjunction and coordination with the TRADOC initiative, HQDA, DCSOPS, should establish a corresponding initiative, centered on the Army War College (AWC), whose purpose would be to address urban operations at the strategic, national, and multinational levels.
- In an initiative to be discussed more fully under the heading of Leader Development, a program of basic research and development should be established at selected TRADOC schools and coordinated by CGSC, the purpose of which would be to contribute both raw and processed data to the doctrine development process.

### ***Training***

- In conjunction with the initiatives described above, a program of command and staff exercises should be established in which commanders and their staffs from battalion to division level conduct on-site tactical exercises without troops (TEWTS) at a succession of CONUS cities selected to represent an ascending scale of size, configuration, and complexity. Operational lessons learned (ORLL) from these exercises should be collected for integration with corresponding programs and exercises.
- Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) exercises for urban operations at the operational level and higher should be developed.
- Current training at the Combat Training Centers (CTCs) should not be interrupted or altered until TRADOC validates changes by standing procedures.

## ***Leader Development***

- TRADOC should initiate a sequential and progressive program of professional-level education bearing upon the conduct of urban operations. CGSC should take the lead in developing a series of professional-level courses for resident and distance classes, the objective of which would be the establishment of a living laboratory for the advancement of professional knowledge bearing upon modern urban operations. These efforts should be coordinated with and participate in both TEWT and BCTP exercises.
- TRADOC should cooperate with HQDA, DCSOPS, and AWC in order to establish corresponding exercise events at the strategic and multinational levels.
- In addition to the developments outlined above, both institutional and unit-level programs should be initiated, the objective of which would be the basic education of Army leaders in urban operations so that professional training and education for urban operations is made an integral part of an officer's professional progress, and not merely a training event.

## ***Organizations and Materiel***

- Until such time as positive control over activities relating to urban operations can be established by the general officer task group discussed above, a moratorium should be declared on the creation of any new organizations or materiel development.
- At the same time, a TRADOC-level study should be initiated in order to capitalize upon work already in progress under the direction of TRADOC ADCST-Transition.
- Once TRADOC establishes oversight, all decisions regarding necessary changes in organization and materiel should be made according to standing procedures.
- TRADOC should convene a study group, either a stand-alone one or as part of other on-going initiatives, whose mission is to devise future organization and operational requirements for strategically deployable formations as described in this study.

## ***Soldiers***

- TRADOC should sponsor the establishment of a command-level task force whose objective is to study, analyze, and forecast psychological, physical, organizational, and material requirements unique to the individual soldier's role in twenty-first century urban operations and to ensure the integration of findings across the spectrum of DTLOMS.

In summary, it should be emphasized that these recommendations are based on the general principle that future urban operations can no longer be regarded as the exclusive province of a particular branch or activity within the US Army. Further, if the Army acts within the spirit of Joint Vision 2010, every effort must be made to capitalize upon the professional knowledge readily available within the sister services who will also be participating in any American military operation in the future.

Finally, if this study contributes in any way to an improvement in the US Army's capability to meet the challenges posed by the most probable kind of military operation in the foreseeable future, the effort and time expended will have been worthwhile.





## Notes

1. *Force XXI Operations: A Concept for the Evolution of Full-Dimension Operations for the Strategic Army of the Early Twenty-First Century*, typescript pamphlet (Fortress Monroe, VA: Department of the Army, Headquarters, Training and Doctrine Command, 1 August 1994). See especially p. 4-2.
2. As of this writing, the newest edition of Field Manual 3.0, *Operations*, has not been officially released for use and may not be directly cited.
3. "Strategic Speed," as the term is used here, is meant to indicate the relative speed with which the party in a given conflict is capable of attaining its strategic objective.

